

IN THE DRAWINGS:

Please enter the attached corrected drawings for Figs. 3-4 and 6, in which the legend "Prior Art" is being added, to replace Figs. 3-4 and 6 as originally filed. A Letter to Draftsperson is also submitted herewith.

REMARKS

The above amendments to the above-captioned application along with the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Official Action dated September 28, 2006. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to give due reconsideration to this application, to indicate the allowability of the claims, and to pass this case to issue.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-4 and 6-25 are under consideration in this application. Claim 5 is being cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1-2, 4, 6-7, 13 and 21-22 are being amended, as set forth above and in the attached marked-up presentation of the claim amendments, in order to more particularly define and distinctly claim Applicants' invention. Claims 23-25 are being added to recite another embodiment described in the specification.

All the amendments to the claims are supported by the specification. Applicants hereby submit that no new matter is being introduced into the application through the submission of this response.

Formality Rejection

The Examiner objected to Figs. 3-4 and 6 for lacking the legend "Prior Art". As indicated, the drawings are being amended as required by the Examiner. Accordingly, the withdrawal of the outstanding informality rejection is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

Allowed Subject Matter

Claims 4-9, 11-12, 15 and 17-22 would be allowed if rewritten into independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Since claim 4 is being rewritten into independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, claim 4 and its dependent claims are in condition for allowance.

Prior Art Rejection

Claims 1-3, 7-8, 10, 13-14 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by US Pat. No. 6,756,958 to Furuhashi (hereinafter "Furuhashi"). This rejection has been carefully considered, but is most respectfully traversed in view of the claims currently on file, as more fully discussed below.

Since the allowable claim 5 is being incorporated into independent claims 1 and 7, claim 5 is being cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, and independent claim 13 already contains the limitation of claim 5, claims 1, 7, 13 and their dependent claims are in condition for allowance.

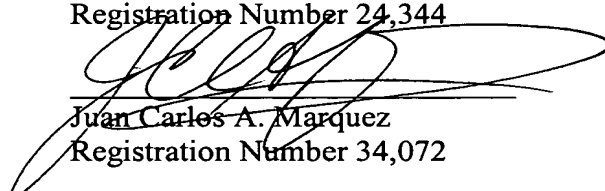
Conclusion

In view of all the above, clear and distinct differences as discussed exist between the present invention as now claimed and the prior art reference upon which the rejections in the Office Action rely, Applicants respectfully contend that the prior art references cannot anticipate the present invention or render the present invention obvious. Rather, the present invention as a whole is distinguishable, and thereby allowable over the prior art.

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding issues requiring discussion that would further the prosecution and allowance of the above-captioned application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the address and telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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February 28, 2007

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